

EYES ONLY

2 January 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Director for Policy Coordination
FROM: Deputy Director (Plans)
SUBJECT: Development of a National Psychological Strategy

1. Attached hereto is a copy of a memorandum which I have just received from the PSB and which purports to summarize the conclusions reached at the conference which I attended on 19 December at the PSB. You will note that it took eleven drafts to arrive at this two-page memorandum, which is some indication of the difficulties which Admiral Stevens and the members of the PSB staff had in reducing the thoughts and recommendations expressed at the meeting to an agreed document. Admiral Stevens has explained to me that one of the difficulties which he experienced in this connection was in convincing the PSB staff that the development of a national psychological strategy can be accomplished only through the contribution of major portions of the effort by the operating departments and agencies most concerned. The opposing philosophy had it that vigorous, fresh minds should take the laboring oar, but Admiral Stevens has indicated that he has substantially succeeded in putting over his point and that the memorandum substantially reflects this.

25X1A 2. This memorandum should be considered by Mr. [REDACTED] staff with the assistance of yourself and [REDACTED] in order that I may make an appropriate reply to the PSB. This is a matter of some urgency and considerable importance, as I am sure you realize. If we agree with the substance of the paper, we should so notify the PSB and at the same time we should indicate what member of our staff will be available to work with the designees of the Department of State and the PSB, etc. It is for OPC to decide who our representatives shall be, but I should think that we should name a person who is familiar with our major capabilities both present and future. Probably this man will require the extensive assistance of at least three of your area divisions: namely, EE, FE, and NEA. It would seem to me that either [REDACTED] could do the job for us and there are good reasons why each of them should be selected.

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3. In our reply we should also suggest that the PSB should continue to monitor the effort. You will note that no reference to PSB is contained in the concluding paragraph. I am informed that the PSB would regard it as a helpful and friendly gesture on our part to make this recommendation. Apparently the language of the concluding paragraph was devised by Admiral Stevens in an effort to bind Messrs. Bohlen, Nitze and myself into the reviewing group -- but specific reference to PSB as such was lost sight of in the process.

4. Although I do not consider it to be a fault of the paper submitted by PSB, no reference was made to the several statements and recommendations which I advanced. I pointed out that in our view any comprehensive strategic plan should provide in some way for the de-termination of priorities as between areas and types of operation; priorities in the application of our national assets; and at least a general estimate of the yearly budget for the several major segments of the effort. These are all very real and practical problems which are confronting CIA at the present time and, as you know, it has been our hope that the PSB would serve as the mechanism for reaching or confirming determinations of this kind. I believe that we could adequately cover these points in our memorandum of reply commenting on the paper submitted so as to call attention one more time to the importance and urgency of these problems. I am inclined to agree with Admiral Stevens that these particular exercises on the part of PSB will have to be conducted separately from the formulation of the basic strategy; but in such case they should follow immediately upon the heels thereof.

5. The following additional thoughts which were advanced during the course of the discussion are of some interest, although admittedly they apply to the actual consideration of the strategy itself rather than the determination of how to set about developing the strategy. The latter is the present exercise. Mr. Bohlen expressed the view that we are still very much in the phase of containment with relatively little that can be positively accomplished behind the Iron Curtain for the moment in forcing the retraction there of Soviet power and influence. The timing is not yet ripe for revolution, but preparations should be made against the day when the development of events, including the build-up of the military strength of the West, will render it more propitious to strike heavy blows within the actual Soviet orbit. Mr. Bohlen estimated that probably one result of the review would be to point up the fact that the priorities lie in the direction of strengthening and saving the most heavily threatened areas of the free world; for example, Southeast Asia and Iran, and other areas of the Middle East.

Put the points
up in
draft.

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6. Mr. Nitze expressed the opinion that a hardening or reinforcing of the Iron Curtain from our side might have some effect in slowing down technological developments within the USSR, but he said that Russian vulnerabilities to economic strangulation are not great. Serious economic stresses and vulnerabilities exist with respect to all of the satellites, which are definitely suffering from the cutting-off of East-West trade. The freeze-up of commodities and manufactured items from the West, coupled with the Soviet vacuum cleaner on the other side, have produced stresses and strains of the greatest magnitude, the further intensification of which might in some cases result in the total collapse of satellite economy.

*a
most
important
point.*



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FRANK. G. WISNER

Encl (1)

Copy #4 (of 7) of memo from
SP Ass't to Dir., PSB, dated
28 Dec. attaching draft memo
of conf. of 19 Dec.

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Copy 4 of 7 Copies

PS B should monitor

December 28, 1951

MEMORANDUM

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TO:

SUBJECT: Sense of the Meeting Held on December 19, 1951,
to Discuss the Problems Involved in the Formulation
of a National Psychological Strategy.

The enclosed working draft is submitted to you for comments
and revision. It represents an informal summary of the conclu-
sions of the December 19 meeting prepared [REDACTED]

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Special Assistant to the Director

PSB:TRP:med
12/28/51

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